

ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2023 IN FULFILLMENT OF THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF MAY 1, 2022 – APRIL 30, 2025.



2024 TOTAL REACH: 37,724 INTERACTIONS

DIRECT (PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PHONE INQUIRIES): 193

MEDIA (NEWSPAPER, RADIO, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB): 37,531

ENERGY ASSESSMENTS

The EAC continued the BN Energy Bright Program with low-cost energy audits – resulting in increased energy efficiency literacy and energy savings. The EAC’s Building Performance Institute Certified staff provides energy audits with diagnostic testing for Bloomington-Normal residents and small businesses.

- Conducted 17 energy consultations for Bloomington and Normal residents; 12 in Normal and 5 in Bloomington.
- Conducted 1 energy audit for small businesses; First Presbyterian Church in Normal.

Community Impact

- Based on figures from the Department of Energy, if residents implement the majority of the easier to accomplish efficiency recommendations (sealing air leaks, adding insulation to the attic and basement, using programmable thermostats, installing LED fixtures, sealing ductwork, etc.) they can save a low estimate of **\$605 annually** on energy costs. Using these figures, participating households will cumulatively save at least **\$10,890 in the first year** after implementing recommended energy saving measures.
- According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Illinois households use an average of 99.3 million BTUs of energy each per year, with an average total cost of \$1,720 per household. Based on the energy equivalents of the monetary savings estimates above, implementing the basic efficiency recommendations means a **savings of 34.8 million BTU per household**.
- This is the equivalent to **avoiding 1.85 metric tons of carbon dioxide** emissions per household.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY MARKETING, OUTREACH, EDUCATION

Throughout the first quarter of 2024, the EAC promoted the BN Energy Bright program and related energy programs to increase community awareness about the benefits of energy efficiency through diverse methods of outreach and promotion.

The program was briefly paused during staffing changes and resumed at the end of 2024.

- Social media advertising and promotion
 - Weekly Facebook and Instagram #EnergyTipTuesday energy posts promoting energy audits and useful energy efficiency tips received 28,763 impressions.
- Website traffic
 - The BNenergyBright.org website pages which contain the energy audit sign-up form, energy efficiency information, and resources for people interested in solar received 4,755
- Ecology Action Center Newsletters
 - The EAC January e-newsletter was sent to 1,889 households and featured an article about heat loss through fire places.
 - The EAC February e-newsletter was sent to 1,863 households and featured an article about the Inflation Reduction Act tax credits and rebates for energy savings.
 - The EAC December Newsletter was sent to 261 residents and promoted the return of the BN Energy Bright program.

Community engagement and outreach

- Direct Inquires
 - Responded to 38 phone calls, emails and visitor inquiries about energy efficiency and renewable energy issues.
- Energy Efficiency presentations and informational booths
 - Discussed reducing energy usage in the home and kitchen to 12 people at the Bloomington Public Library.
 - Talked to 11 people during the Babyfold Wellness Fair about the BN Energy Bright program.
 - Presented to 9 students of an ISU Senior Research Class about the EAC's energy program.
 - Updated 30 members of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission on the Ecology Action Center's programs including BN Energy Bright.
 - Presented energy efficiency and solar information to 63 members of the Young Men's Club.
 - Talked about energy choice, energy efficiency, and renewable energy to 12 people at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bloomington.

PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

The EAC continues to leverage its energy efficiency program and energy expertise to promote energy efficiency through other programs, and expand renewable energy adoption in the county.

- Illinois Solar for All Grassroots Education (ILSFA)
 - The EAC was awarded a 5th year of funding to continue Grassroots Education work in our community about the Illinois Solar for All program. The ILSFA program year ends during the EAC's second quarter. The EAC is not seeking funding for the 2024-2025 program year.
 - During the first half of 2024, the EAC had one-on-one conversations with Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal, Home Sweet Home Ministries, the Minority Business Development Council, a Bloomington resident about solar options through the Illinois Solar for All program and several other residents about the single-family solar program.
- Illinois Prairie Community Foundation Grant
 - The EAC received a grant for \$22,500 to fund weatherization projects for low-income residents that do not qualify for existing utility programs. EAC staff is partnering with the Immigration Project to reach residents that either have all Ameren service or Corn Belt and Nicor (meaning they do not qualify for the Ameren-Nicor program) that are struggling with their utility bills. EAC is working to secure a contractor to work on this program.
- Nicor-Ameren Pilot Program
 - The EAC continues to provide community outreach to promote the Ameren-Nicor pilot program which aims to provide free energy efficiency upgrades, full home energy audits, and weatherization upgrades to low-income (80% AMI) households in Bloomington-Normal.
 - During 2024, the EAC connected 12 residents to this program to receive energy efficiency retrofits with added insulation and air-sealing.